

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Norcot

App Ref: PL/25/1673 Full planning permission

Address: 5 STONEHAM CLOSE, TILEHURST, READING, RG30 4HB

Proposal: New dwelling to the rear of No.5, replacing existing garage, including parking and landscaping

Applicant: Mr Salman Ali

Received date: 21/11/2025

Target Decision date: 16/01/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site forms part of the garden of number 5 Stoneham Close. It contained a single garage, which has been removed. To the north is 5 Stoneham Close, a semidetached property with some garden remaining to the rear. To the west is the rear garden of number 7 Stoneham Close, to the east is Stoneham Close, with number 87 beyond and to the south is a substation and the rear garden of number 81 Cockney Hill, with the property beyond. The site faces onto Stoneham Close to the east.

The area is characterised by open corner plots and the pattern of development around the edge of Stoneham Close is typically front gardens with houses set back from the road with larger rear gardens 20m in depth that are grass covered and softened with trees and vegetation. Houses along Stoneham Close are brick with cladding and tiled roofs.

The site has no allocations or designations in the Local Plan.

Site visits were conducted on 9 December 2025 and 6 January 2026

Fig 1: map from Reading ishare map showing position of former garage and inset boundary fence

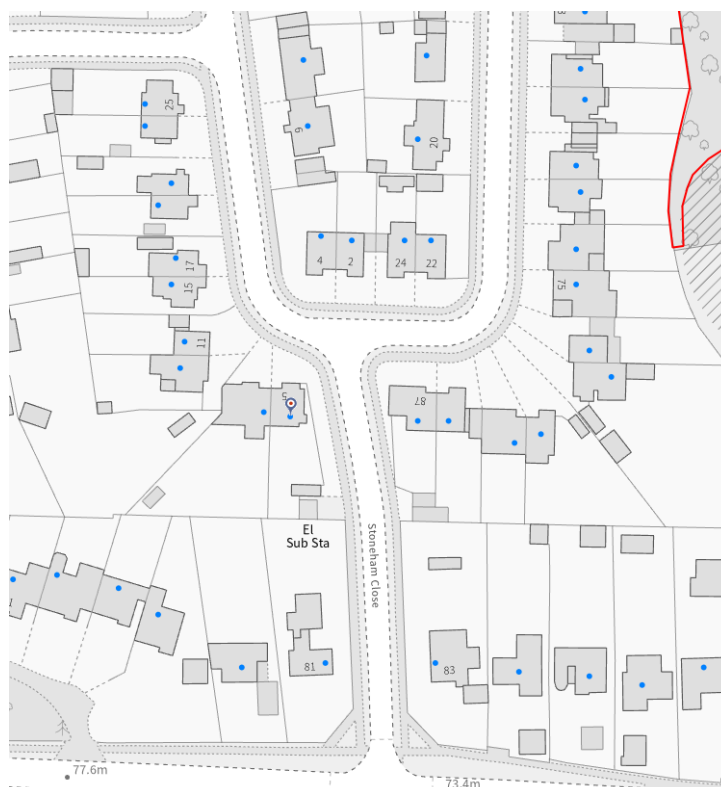


Fig 2 Photo of the front of 5 Stoneham Close



The location is sited next to an electric substation.

Fig 3 photo taken at site when site notices displayed. There is no existing garage



Fig 4 View of the hill to 5 Stoneham Close



Fig 5 View of opposite side of hill



Fig 6 Road frontage of 5 Stoneham Close



Fig 7 View of rear garden for 5 Stoneham Close

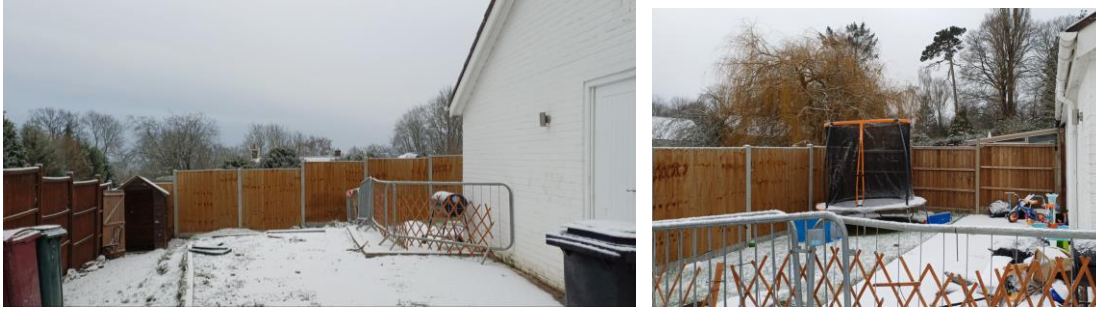


Fig 8 Sub divided land to rear of 5 Stoneham Close



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a 2 bedroom, two storey C3 new dwellinghouse measuring approx. 7.7m in depth, 6m in width, 3.28m to eaves on northern elevation, 4.48m to the eaves on the South elevation and rising to a ridge height of 6.6m. It would be located in an area which is currently the rear garden of no. 5 Stoneham Close.

The section of garden proposed for the site as shown on the red line area is reported to be 200m² in the CA-1082-DAS02 Rev 1 Design and Access statement, with a footprint of 72m² for the proposed two-storey dwelling. The ground floor consists of an open plan kitchen/living room and a WC. The second floor is set into a steep pitched gable roof and consists of 2 bedrooms and a bathroom. The CIL form states that the total gross internal space to be provided is 72m².

Due to the taper of the plot, the proposal would be located significantly closer to the street than the existing flank wall at no.5 Stoneham Close. The proposed dwelling would be 1.4m from the highway land (edge of the footway) at its closest point, and 2.5mm at its greatest. The original dwelling is

some ~7m from the edge of the footway. Due to the shape of the red line area, and the existence of a substation on the southern edge of the site, the plot area is oddly defined, and results in the proposed dwelling being close to all boundaries, with 7m to the rear of its plot (adjoining no.7 Stoneham Close), 3m to the northern boundary, and 0.5m to the side boundary of the substation (southern). A proposed landscaped area and cycle storage is proposed to extend 2.15m in front of the existing entrance access to the SSE electric substation.

The proposal would provide 2 no. parking spaces in a tandem arrangement between the dwelling and end of the garden at 5 Stoneham Close and 2 no. parking spaces for the original dwelling to the north in close proximity to the corner of Stoneham Close. The site plan shows hardstanding for the car parking and pathway to the entrance and cycle store area. There is limited space along the frontage, or within the site for vegetation. The site is situated on a hill and due to the incline, the ground levels are proposed to be lowered and levelled for the dwelling and car parking spaces to be 0.5m stepped down on the boundary with 5 Stoneham Close. The 1082 05-10 rev B elevation plan states that the house will be lower than the pavement and garden and the car is shown to be parked lower than the pavement level.

A previous access into the rear garden to the former garage with existing dropped kerb is proposed to be moved to the other side of the new dwelling where parking spaces are located along an existing section of public footpath. The current use of the land is private residential garden for 5 Stoneham Close. The proposal seeks to re-configure the site to reduce the size of the existing rear garden for 5 Stoneham Close.

Plans Considered

1082 - SLP 02-01. Location Plan
1082 - PR BP 02-10-C Block plan
1082 - PR 03-10-C Proposed plan
1082 - PR ele 1 05-10 B Front and Rear Elevations
1082 - PR ele 2 05-11 B. Section AA

CA-1082-DAS02. Design and Access Statement
TN01 Technical Note – Transport implications CS - coread - 2025-11-11. Motion
BPC 21495 Arboricultural report - 5a Stoneham Close Reading, Bucks Plant Care Ltd Arboricultural Consultancy Service
5 Stoneham form_1_cil
As received 21 November 2025

Email with affordable housing statement 04/12/2025 09:15 to state that contribution will be equivalent to a 10% on-site provision, or alternatively a 5% commuted sum and that the applicant would enter into a S106 legal agreement if heads of terms can be agreed at the appropriate stage.
As received 4 December 2025

V.02 8132 5 Stoneham Close BNG 25.11.25 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Pro Vision
V.05 8132 5 Stoneham Close PEA 25.11.25 Ecological Impact Assessment, November 2025, Pro vision
The_Statutory_Metric - 5 Stoneham Close 05.11.25
As received 9 December 2025

2. Relevant Planning History

6447 - Street, Plot layout 53 Houses

6542 - 53 Houses

211184/OUT - Outline application considering appearance, layout and scale for the construction

of a two storey building for 1 x 1, 1 x 2 and 1 x 3 bedroom flats with a mansard roof on land to the rear of 5 Stoneham Close Withdrawn 13/12/2021

220943/OUT - Outline application for a 1 storey building creating 2 x dwellings with mansard roof, with appearance, layout and scale to be considered (access and landscaping reserved for future consideration) Withdrawn 09/09/2022

230120/OUT - Outline application for the demolition of existing garage and erection of two houses Refused 28/04/2023

231621/OUT - Construction of new 2 storey 3 bedroom house. Returned invalid.

240998/FUL - Construction of Two Storey - 3 Bedroom house and retrospective demolition of existing garage. Refused

25/0680/FUL - New dwelling to the rear of No.5, replacing existing garage, including parking and landscaping. Withdrawn

4. CONSULTATIONS

Two site notices on 9 December 2025 at the front of 5 Stoneham Close and side of the site and paper copies of the site notice were posted through letterboxes to 16 neighbouring properties on Stoneham Close, Cockney Hill and Walmer Close that had commented on the previous planning applications.

Comments were received during the consultation period and whilst the planning application was under consideration. Neighbours complained of a lack of notification. A site notice was still on display at the date of a site visit following the end of the consultation period.

17 letters of objection have been received raising concerns relating to:

- traffic hazards and road risks,
- vehicle manoeuvring near King's Academy School,
- pedestrian safety,
- parking provision,
- visitor parking and deliveries,
- visibility and access on a steep hill and blind corner and highway safety concerns,
- it does not align with the demography of the area,
- overlooking of properties and their gardens,
- no front space as development is close to the road,
- impact on natural habitat and loss of green space,
- Concerns regarding proximity to an electric sub station,
- negative impact on the character of quiet residential area,
- 5 previous applications refused or withdrawn,
- sewage and drainage provision

RBC Transport

This application is for a new 2 bedroom dwelling, located at the rear of No5 following the demolition of the existing garage.

In accordance with the Councils current Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed 2 bedroom dwelling would require 2 off street parking spaces (rounded up from 1.5). Any loss of parking associated with the main dwelling (5 Stoneham Close) must be re-provided to ensure that enough parking is provided and there is not a knock-on effect on the safety and function of the highway through on-street parking therefore 2 parking spaces must be retained for the existing dwelling.

Proposed block plan identifies 2 parking spaces in tandem formation for the new dwelling. The existing access serving the garage is to be relocated north to serve the new dwelling. The visibility

would be reducing from what it is existing. a 10m distance is highlighted in the vehicle crossing policy document (see link below) which states at point 5 that “a vehicle crossing should be a minimum distance of 10m away from a junction. This Policy does not reference junction spacings and only that it should be 10m away from a junction, the proposed design would therefore not comply with this Policy requirement.

[Vehicle crossing policy - Reading Borough Council](#)

The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement justifying visibility splays. Clarification is required from the applicant where in manual for streets it says that a visibility splay can be cut short at the junction. Should a reduced visibility splay be proposed speed surveys would be required to ascertain the speeds along this stretch of Stoneham Close.

The objection therefore still remains.

Refusal Reason

The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of Stoneham Close would result in conflicting traffic movements which would have an adverse effect on road safety and the flow of traffic. This would be in conflict with Local Plan Policies TR3 and TR5.

RBC Natural Environment Note the landscaping information provided has incorporated an area of land that appears to be part of the electric substation.

I had previously commented on an application for this site (PL/25/0680) on 5th July 2025. This application has tree and landscape issues, similar to that of other previous applications for the site. I concluded in my previous comments for PL/25/0680: *To conclude the proposal is not acceptable on tree and landscape grounds. The report does not demonstrate mitigating harm to trees/hedges. The extent of the tree/vegetation removal is unclear as the documents are not consistent.*

With reference to the ARBORICULTURAL REPORT, 31st October 2025, Ref: Ref BPC 21495, I note the following:

Firstly, I note that the majority of the previously existing boundary vegetation has been removed from the site, some of which was previously proposed to be retained. The extent of this vegetation removal is unclear, as this has been undertaken prior to the Arboricultural Report being written. This is disappointing as for the previous application, I expressed concerns regarding the clarity of vegetation removal. I am now concerned that as the vegetation removal has been undertaken prior to the submission of this application, this makes the extent and impact of the vegetation removal even more difficult to assess and sufficiently mitigate. The only vegetation retained is H01 along the southern boundary.

It is clear from Photo 1 and Photo 2 of the Arboricultural Report that vegetation clearance has taken place – see below.



Photo 1 in Arb Report

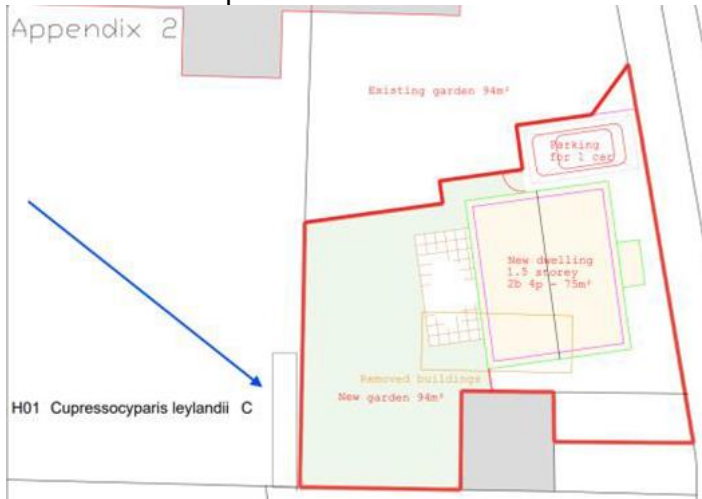


Photo 2 in Arb Report

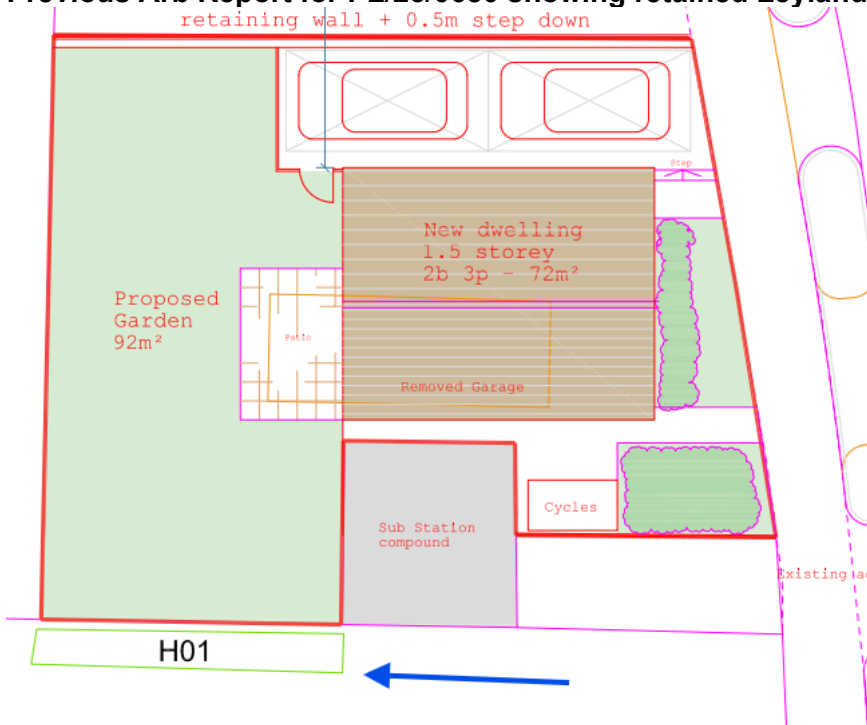
4.2 states '*There are no RPAs issues*' – RPAs have not been plotted but new landscaping is proposed in close proximity to H01 so I am unclear how this conclusion has been drawn.

3.4 states '*There are no off-site trees close to the boundary*'. I note a clearly large Willow tree in adjacent land in Photo 2. It is a large tree and in somewhat close proximity to the rear of the development (iShare gives an estimate of less than 10m – all trees need to be plotted within 15m of any part of the area being developed [landscaping included]). It is expected this tree and its RPA is plotted to demonstrate it does not extend into any part of the development area/boundary to provide evidence that its RPA will not be impacted. If its RPA was to extend into the development site, tree protection will be required. If excavation is required for the landscaping in the RPA i.e. levelling the ground level, then appropriate working methodology for working within RPAs will need to be demonstrated. I assume the ground of the rear garden will be levelled as there is a retaining wall along the northern boundary. For absolute clarity, we require this tree to be surveyed and its RPA plotted, so that any impact can be demonstrated and mitigated, or providing us assurance that the RPA does not extend into the site.

The previous Arboricultural Report, 12th March 2025, Ref BPC 21366, for PL/25/0680, demonstrated a retained Leylandi hedge along the western boundary that is now not shown in the current proposals Arboricultural Report; so I assume this has been removed. If this is not the case, I question why it hasn't been plotted as it was previously. See below for comparisons of current and previous applications Arboricultural Reports and above recent photographs of the site taken from this application's Arboricultural Report.



Previous Arb Report for PL/25/0680 showing retained Leylandi hedge on western boundary



Current Arb Report for PL/25/1673 showing H01 on southern boundary, but Leylandi hedge on western boundary not plotted (likely removed)

I note both these hedges on southern and western boundary have been included Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, November 2025 and the associated Proposed Habitat Map, Drawing No. 8132-XX-E0-02, Issue: v1 24th November 2025, and are shown as retained and connected.

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The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. This scale from this drawing for the purpose of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.
The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to the client immediately.

Legend

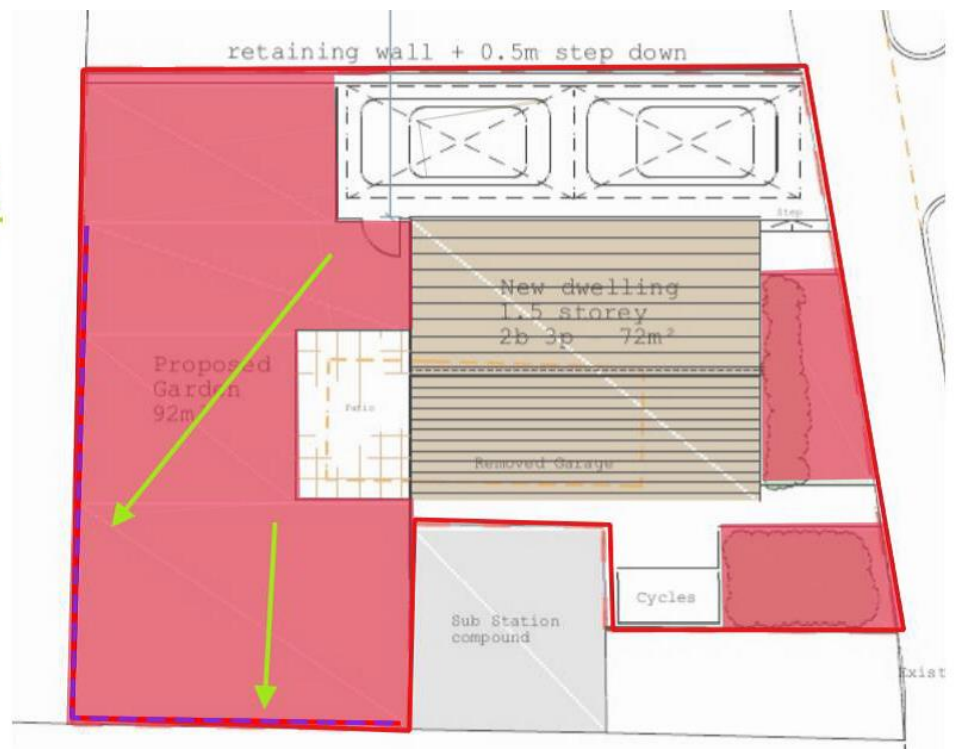
Red Line Boundary



Non-native and ornamental hedgerow



Vegetated garden



Proposed Habitat Map showing both southern and western boundary hedges retained.

The Proposed Habitat Map also describes the proposed garden as a 'vegetated garden'. With reference to the Proposed Site Plan, April 2025, Drawing No. 02-10, Rev C, I note this garden appears to be just a lawn area with a patio. There are no labels to clearly demonstrate that this is a lawn, however it is assumed as it is shown as a green space. With reference to Ground Floor Plan, March 2025, Drawing No. 03-10, Rev C, I note some new shrub planting on the frontage which is clearly labelled and positive.

I am unclear as to why no new planting has been indicated in the rear garden, or even labelled as a grassed area.

It would be reasonable to request a proposed vs existing landscape principles plan which clearly demonstrates the changes to the landscaping. This should include vegetation removal/retention (specifically to clarify the southern and western boundary hedging situation). New hard surfacing and associated materials should also be clearly demonstrated and labelled. It is also expected to demonstrate new planting; as the rear garden is described as vegetated and has space for planting other than just a lawn area, new planting here is expected to mitigate for the loss of the existing soft landscaping and increased development.

It would certainly be positive if tree planting was considered to contribute to the enhancements of the soft landscaping of the site and mitigation for the increased development. I don't consider this as an unreasonable suggestion as there is adequate space for tree planting within the rear garden space, without significantly impacting the amount of useable garden space. Policy EN14: *New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site*. Tree Strategy Objective 11: *tree retention, protection and planting within development sites to be in accordance with the aims of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policy*.

To conclude, as with the previous application, inconsistency between documents makes the extent of any vegetation loss and its associated impact difficult to accurately assess as retention vs removals are unclear. The Design and Access Statement, May 2025, Ref: CA-1082-DAS02, Rev 1,

acknowledges this with the previous application by stating in Point 4, Page 7: *The Tree Officer concluded that the proposal was not acceptable on tree and landscape grounds, as the extent of vegetation loss was unclear and mitigation measures were insufficient* This is a repeat concern with this proposal as vegetation retention and removals are still not clear or consistent. As suggested above, an existing vs proposed landscape principles plan is a reasonable request. This will provide clarity on the southern and western boundary hedging. This will also demonstrate mitigation for the increased development and loss of vegetation.

I do not consider what is currently proposed as adequate mitigation; hence I have suggested further planting in the rear garden, including trees as this would be positive, feasible and appropriate mitigation without significantly lessening the useable rear garden space; whilst also aiding acceptability regarding Policy EN14 and the aims of our adopted Tree Strategy. The Willow tree in adjacent land also needs to be included in the survey, along with any other trees with 15m of any part of the proposal, with their RPAs plotted.

Reason for refusal - Failure to demonstrate that trees in the vicinity will be protected.

RBC Ecology – Note the BNG information provided has incorporated an area of land that appears to be part of the electric substation

The application site comprises a garden and garage to the rear of 5 Stoneham close where it is proposed to demolish the garage and erect a single house. The application is similar to application 211184 and 220943, both of which were withdrawn and applications 230120 and 240998 which were refused. A more recent planning application PL/25/0680 was subsequently withdrawn.

The current application is supported by an updated ecology report and biodiversity net gain calculation. The ecology report (Pro Vision, Nov 2025) concludes that the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect priority habitat or protected species. There is a low risk of impacts on nesting birds during vegetation clearance and on commuting/foraging bats as a result of external lighting, but impacts can be avoided or minimised via conditions – example wording provided below.

Confirmation of the land ownership and impact on BNG would be required. The current biodiversity net gain assessment (Pro Vision, Nov 2025) concludes the development will result in a 19.42% net gain in habitat units through the creation of vegetated garden and a gain of 22.71% for Linear habitat units.

Conditions:

Condition: Prior to the occupation of the development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to **Planning** include one integrated bird and one bat box, tile or brick (or universal nest bricks) built into the new building and native and wildlife friendly landscaping (including gaps at the bases of fences to allow hedgehogs to traverse through the gardens), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved. A short letter report (including photos of the bricks/boxes/tiles in situ), stating that the bat and bird roosting facilities have been installed as per the approved plan is to be submitted to the Council prior to the occupation of the dwelling.

Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with paragraph 192 and 193 of the NPPF

Condition: All trees, hedges and shrubs or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (mid-March to August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and

advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded no works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until the nest(s) are no longer in use
Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development.

Condition: No new exterior lighting is to be installed without the prior written permission of the local planning authority.

Reason: To limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on nature conservation in accordance with paragraph 191 of the NPPF and EN12 of the Local Plan

RBC Waste

The Council's standard household waste collection service is for fortnightly recycling collections, fortnightly general waste collections and weekly food waste collections.

One residential unit would need to have space for the below bins:

- 1 x 140L general waste bin
- 1 x 240L recycling bin
- 1x 23L food waste caddy

Developers must also take into consideration upcoming changes to residential waste collection services as per Simpler Recycling requirements in the future. These requirements will increase the amount of material recycled/collected at the kerbside (i.e. addition of glass & soft plastics) and so additional refuse space should be allocated to allow for this. Note: glass can currently only be recycled at local glass bottle banks or the tip.

Most homes will get a 55-litre box for glass. This will be collected every two weeks. Space would need to be allocated for this within the site.

The bins/boxes would need to be presented for collection at the edge of the property on Stoneham Close and returned to within the boundary of the private property promptly after collection. Bins must not be left out on the pavement.

Please see our waste management guide for further information - <https://www.reading.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/waste-management-guidelines-for-property-developers-architects-planners-contractors-managing-agents-and-landlords/>

Please note that we require at least 6 weeks' notice prior to residents moving into a development to ensure that bins can be purchased, delivered and collections scheduled in with the crews.

Thames Water

Re: LAND REAR TO 5, STONEHAM CLOSE, TILEHURST, READING, RG30 4HB
WASTE:

With regard to SURFACE WATER drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow guidance under sections 167, 168 & 169 in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to our website. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/home-improvements/how-to-connect-to-a-sewer/sewer-connection-design>

The foul water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, we would expect in high risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the

vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

The surface water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, we would expect in high risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. Developers must liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. This must also ensure that the design of any SUDS or surface water management solution conveys exceedance flows away from public sewer networks. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

Thames Water would advise that with regard to WASTE WATER NETWORK and SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

WATER:

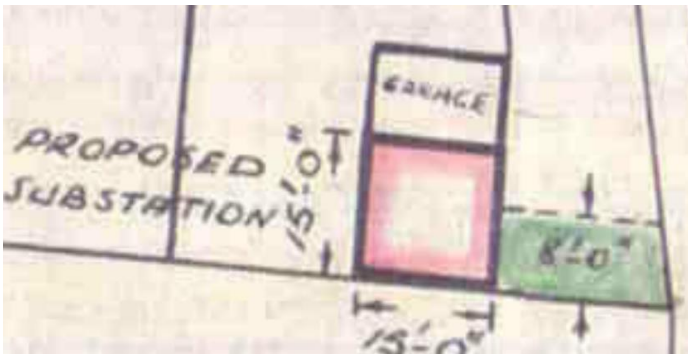
If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater.

On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application. Thames Water recommends the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development

SSE

I write to confirm that SEPD owns a substation site adjacent to the property and has associated low and high voltage underground cables in the vicinity. The developer is advised to take all necessary health and safety precautions when excavating in the area and to contact us direct if he has any concerns.

In view of the proximity to our property we would expect to receive the relevant party wall notice if applicable. The Title plan confirms our title is a 15 foot squared area. Protection measures may also be needed to protect our apparatus from damage, the developer is asked to ensure all safety and protection measures are taken.



5. Equality Act

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

Local Plan Update The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024 and a submission version submitted in May 2025. Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the advice given below and are not considered to be 'out of date'. Policies CC2 and CC3 are being updated to reflect developments in climate change and sustainability construction which should be a consideration in the Local Plan review. Policy CC7 reiterates that all development must be of high quality design, to maintain and enhance physical character and context. Policy EN12 includes the addition of wildlife friendly schemes. Policy H1 states that provision will be made for at least an additional 825 dwellings per annum (14,850 over the plan period 2023-2041). Policy H2 identifies that the greatest need for family homes is for 3 or more bedroom houses. Policy H3 will continue to require an affordable housing contribution for any additional new dwelling. Policy H5 requires netzero development and requirements for renewable energy, with energy statements to be provided.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (updated February 2025)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)

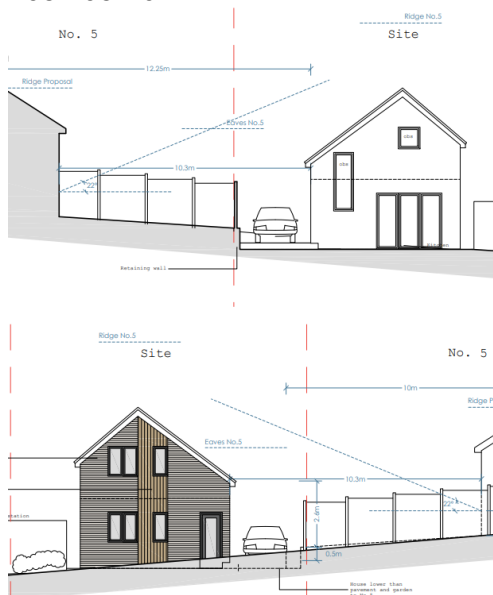
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document (2015)

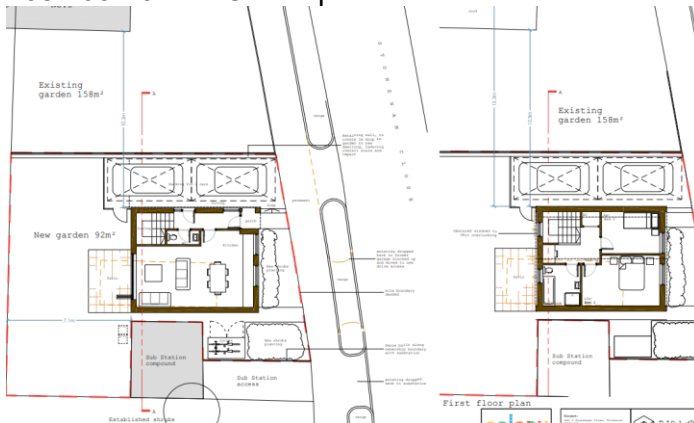
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

7. APPRAISAL

1082 05-10 Rev B Elevations



1082 03-10 Rev C floor plans



Principle of Development

The NPPF encourages the efficient use of land, and states (para.124): *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”*

Brownfield land is defined within the NPPF as (Previously Developed Land): *“Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.”*

The subject plot in question is the garden curtilage of a residential dwelling. The NPPF 2024 para 75 states that *“plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development to residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area,”* whilst para 129 regarding appropriate densities highlights the *“desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens)”*.

The principle of the development would, therefore, need to be assessed in terms of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 75 that seeks to ensure that policies are set out to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens.

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that Local Plans should outline a strategy to meet the objectively assessed needs of the Borough in a way which makes as much use as possible of Brownfield Land. The Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 does include a range of policies which reflect this. The Local Plan, and supporting documents steer development to brownfield sites, and as per the latest Annual Monitoring Report (2023-2024) Reading is delivering above the target number of dwellings as set out within the Local Plan.

The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) provides a framework for the delivery of development within the Borough over the plan period. This includes provision of 689 homes per annum (on average).

This includes a shortfall of 230 dwellings, however, the Local Plan (2019) and associated policies were adopted with full knowledge of this shortfall. The provision of new development on 'windfall sites' can be considered, and the benefit of this supply is considered positive though is generic to any proposal for new housing, and as such it given appropriate weight.

As such, it is considered that Brownfield Land is the highest priority for development. Notwithstanding, the provision of windfall sites within other areas is considered under the Local Plan. At the local level, the Council's Local Plan (Policy H11) establishes a number of criteria against which applications for the development of private residential gardens need to be assessed, in accordance with Paragraph 75 of the NPPF.

Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens), states:

"Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*
 - *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
- 2) *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
- 3) *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
- 4) *The proposal does not lead to tandem development⁸⁹;*
- 5) *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
- 6) *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
- 7) *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing*
- 8) *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
- 9) *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.*

The site is considered to be a residential garden and not previously developed land. Although the provision of an additional dwelling would contribute to additional housing within the borough under policy H1 (Provision of housing), the subdivision of the residential garden in this instance is considered an unacceptable development. The unacceptability of the proposal is assessed against the relevant policies as follows.

Density, Design, and Character and Appearance of the area

Part 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places includes a number of paragraphs around design and fitting with character of areas. Specifically, Paragraph 135 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states:

"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."

The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) includes a number of policies relating to the design and location of dwellings. Specifically: CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H2 (Density and Mix), H11 (Development of private residential gardens).

Policy H2 relates to general location, accessibility, density and housing mix matters. Where policy CC7 requires that *"all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form ..."*

Policy H2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *"The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:*

- *the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix,*
- *and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;*
- *its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *the need to achieve high quality design;*
- *the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and*
- *the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers."*

Policy H11, set out above, includes a range of criteria for assessment of new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or former curtilage of private residential gardens.

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states: *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -*

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials*

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -

- *Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place*
- *Continuity and enclosure*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping*
- *Ease of movement and permeability*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.*

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character*
- *and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.*

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.”

The area is characterised by a ~1950-60's development, of reasonably large plots, with generous rear gardens and carparking. The design of the buildings are standard, with a mix of brick, and linear cladding. There is also a mix of styles, with 1.5 storey (including accommodation within the roof) and two-storey semi-detached properties as the prevailing dwelling type within Stoneham Close. The immediately adjacent dwellings on Cockney Hill are somewhat unique, compared to the prevailing type of detached dwelling within larger plots which exists along Cockney Hill. These include large setbacks to Cockney Hill.

Notably, the owner of no.5 Stoneham Close has erected a ~2m high close boarded fence without planning permission following purchase in December 2020. This has enclosed the rear garden to a greater extent than the original situation, provides less visibility from the original garage location, and was conducted without planning permission (Permitted development rights allow a 1m high fence adjoining a highway. No enforcement action has been undertaken in relation to this by Council at the time of writing. Though, the original situation is considered to be the base for assessment of the application given the unauthorised nature of the current fencing.



Figure 9 - Streetview image 2020



Figure 9 - Streetview image 2023

The existing character and amenity of the area is therefore one of relatively low density development set within large plots with large gardens and good separation between dwelling, resulting in a spacious character to the area. Policy CC7, H2, and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 required all development to comply with various elements of form, and function relative to the area in which development is proposed.

The proposal is considered to fail a number of these aspects and has failed to overcome concerns raised in previous planning applications. The proposed scheme has been considered on its own merits. The developments location, layout, and density is out of keeping with the prevailing spacious character of the area. The development would be cramped within the plot, by virtue of the shape of the plot and proximity to the boundaries. The proposal is therefore considered to not make a positive contribution to the character of the area, and the relationship of built form and spaces around the building are not considered appropriate.

The proposed development would include a single two bedroom, two storey detached dwelling to the rear of 5 and 7 Stoneham Close, built within close proximity to its surrounding boundaries. The boundary walls measure approximately 7m from the rear of 5 Stoneham Close and 6.85m from the rear boundary with 7 Stoneham Close and 0.5 from the side of the electric substation and continuing 2.15m along the existing frontage of the substation. The frontage of the new dwellinghouse would be 1.4m from the pedestrian footpath with a new access proposed that would no longer align with the existing access at 87 Stoneham Close. This would follow a different pattern of development compared to other properties with front gardens measuring 5-10m along Stoneham Close. It would also result in a cramped street scene.

It is evident from the window placement that the design of the additional house has been constructed to avoid any direct overlooking issues and to provide future occupants with the most convenient living accommodation with windows provided for all habitable rooms. The roof is hipped to provide sufficient daylight and sunlight for rear ground floor rooms at 5 Stoneham Close. However the design of the new dwelling has been constrained by the logistical limitations of the plot and does not overcome the close proximity of the boundary fencing to neighbouring properties. The proposed rear windows despite being labelled as obscured, provide an impression of overlooking toward to rear garden at 7 Stoneham Close. The resultant 7.7m depth of the new dwelling, brick walls and roof design with provide an unneighbourly, overbearing blank facade and oppressive impact for surrounding properties at 5 Stoneham Close and to the rear amenity of 81 Cockney Hill due to the rise in elevation of the road along the front of the site.

The proposal would provide a dwelling which is crowded on both sides by boundary fencing, hardstanding for carparking and the substation, with limited opportunity for landscaping to the front of the site. Though the section of the road which it lies does not have a similar character to the Close it is a part of, it would still be overly dominated and out of rhythm relative to the layout and form of the area. The removal of the original boundary fencing has taken away visually softening elements of the site and removal of the grassed area between the footway and the original fencing. In addition, the proposal would provide most of the site frontage as hardstanding, both by carparking areas, and

other paving to the proposed cycle store. This is due to the constrained nature of the site leaving insufficient room to the front of the dwelling to provide any substantive soft landscaping. The plans do not specify grass or an adequate landscaping scheme.

The proposed appearance is proposed to match the materials of the existing dwelling however the proposed plan 1082 05-10 b does not reflect the appearance of 5 Stoneham Close. A condition for further materials specifications would be required if the proposal is considered acceptable to ensure that the materials will be in keeping with other properties along Stoneham Close. 5 Stoneham Close has a semi-detached 'chalet' style asymmetrical catslide roof that slopes downwards over the front left hand side to the ground floor, with a more layered and incremental appearance than the proposed two storey box style with no dormers or catslides. The new dwelling is proposed to have a similar form as surrounding houses on Stoneham Close, however would have a different roof form and differing proportions of brick and cladding which has been contrived to fit into a constrained site.

The amended proposal fails to overcome the previous concerns in appearance with a proposed box design with minimal fenestration to the frontage, and limited opening to the sides. The proposal would be a full two-storey dwelling, set down ~1m from the ground floor level of no.5 Stoneham Close. The ridge is purported by the agent to approximately match that of no.5 and 4 Stoneham Close however it is in a different orientation for the proposed house. An AA section plan has been provided however there is a lack of topographical information on the streetscene drawing. The parked car for the new dwelling is shown below the pavement level with no indication of how the access will be constructed and align with the pedestrian footpath. It is unhelpful in allowing the impact to be assessed and as such the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the design would be acceptable relative to the sloping nature of the site and adjacent access.

There are irregularities with the plans submitted as the front elevation windows do not match the floor ground or first floor plans and the long window as shown on the rear elevation is not shown on the ground floor plan.

As such, the proposal, by virtue of its location, proximity to boundaries, form, scale, and detailed design, including parking, servicing and lack of soft landscaping relative to the lower density developments surrounding it would represent a cramped, poorly designed development which would be harmful to the open spacious character of the existing rear garden, and would disrupt, and harm the urban grain and character and appearance of the area.

The character of the local area is residential in nature and generally low density; however the proposed development will be out of keeping with the established pattern of development of semi-detached properties and short runs of terraced housing with open and spacious corner plots and generous gardens. Outbuildings within gardens are present, but are predominantly small scale, single storey and ancillary in use. The design is cramped within the plot with little provision for soft landscaping for the new dwelling or for 5 Stoneham Close.

The proposed dwelling, due to its location to the rear of no 5 Stoneham Close, would form an unacceptable density of development with a greater intensification of the site in comparison to any existing buildings within the area. There is no precedent for detached dwellings in the area. The site is not considered an adequate size to accommodate the proposed development. It would appear incongruous and awkward in its context, appearing overly dominant, isolated and out of place in the streetscene. The current streetscene has a planned layout and this would be distinctly at odds with this existing arrangement.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised above, there are also concerns related specifically in terms of the appearance of the new dwelling that is incongruous and contrived to fit into the constrained garden amenity, with development in close proximity to neighbouring properties. The detached box

style design is contrived to fit into the sub divided residential garden, in close proximity to neighbouring boundaries with an overbearing and oppressive impact on garden amenity. Both of the resultant gardens would be materially smaller than those of neighbouring dwellings.

The existing garden at 5 Stoneham Close would have a rear garden measuring 7m in depth and as such, the impact on 5 Stoneham Close should be assessed as well as the impact of the new development within the site.

The resultant dwelling would be fundamentally at odds with the layout, scale and form of the character of the area and prevailing pattern of development. The proposal, as a development set within a residential garden fails to make a positive contribution to the character of the area, the building is crammed into a location that cannot adequately accommodate the servicing requirements for it, and results in a cramped and overdeveloped parcel of land. The site would also be detrimental to the amenity of existing and future residents as discussed in the section below.

With regard to mix, policy H2 (Density and Mix) states that: *"Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms."*

The submitted information indicates that the proposed scheme could be for a 2-bedroom house, which would fail to comply with Policy H2.

The proposal would result in an unacceptable density of development and, due to its uncharacteristic relationship with existing built form and spaces within the surrounding area, the prevailing pattern of development and urban grain and its proposed plot size. Its design is out of keeping with the prevailing form of terraced and semi-detached houses along Stoneham Close. A single detached property fails to respond positively to its local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. The proposed development does not respect the size and character and appearance of similar spaces in the vicinity, including garden areas. The development of the rear of the garden contributes to the degradation of the open plot, which is compounded by the culmination of development on the original site. The proposal represents an overly intensive use of the site and overdevelopment, due to the harm to the character and pattern of development of the surrounding area that would result, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the local character and would be contrary to the NPPF, Policies H10, H11 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The remainder of this appraisal shall demonstrate, the proposal would also fail to meet a number of the Policy H11 criteria, in particular elements 1), 2) and 6) . The proposal, by virtue of its location, and proximity to boundaries would fail to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Specifically, the layout and relationship (as mentioned above) would provide a poor relationship to existing buildings and spaces. The layout would not integrate with the coverage of adjoining plots, and would fail to provide any space for appropriate landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. It would be at odds with the existing urban grain and urban structure of the area. Though the scale, height and massing of the building matches the area, the materiality, contrived designs necessitated by the restricted size of the plot fail to provide high design quality respectful of the character and appearance of the area. Overall, these number of failings in this regard highlight the unacceptable positioning of the proposed development.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 'Residential Amenity of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *"Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:*

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*

- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.”*

Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF states: “... *f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*”

In addition to CC8, policy H11 notes a number of points on amenity, which will also be considered in this section.

The design does not result in direct overlooking of neighbouring properties with obscured glass proposed for the rear elevation and the plans demonstrate access to daylight and sunlight for the windows on the rear ground elevation at 5 Stoneham Close. Despite the hipped roof being angled away from neighbouring properties at first floor level, due to the close proximity of the additional dwelling in relation to its neighbours, it would result in a visual dominance, appearing overbearing and unneighbourly. The rear garden at 5 Stoneham Close would be dominated by a taller structure than the former single storey garage at the end of the garden. The siting of the proposed dwelling would not provide for spaciousness around itself nor the existing house that would be characteristic of the area and is considered to dominate the plot. The separation distances between the dwelling and its boundaries will result in a poor outlook for future occupants from the ground floor living and dining room windows, in addition for occupants at 5 Stoneham Close, with rear views directly onto boundary walls and the 7.7m deep brick walls and roofline of the new dwelling. It is considered that there would be an unneighbourly impact on neighbouring properties at 5 and 7 Stoneham Close and 81 Cockney Hill.

To a lesser extent, the views from no.4 Stoneham Close would have similar views of the proposal. These views would be considered significantly overbearing, removing most of the pleasant outlook given by the elevated position. Though no right to a view, the outlook would be significantly altered to that of a blank wall within close proximity of the existing dwelling.

The proposal would be located on the southern side of the existing dwellings. Therefore, it is likely that the proposal would result in loss of daylight/sunlight to the existing dwellings.

Amenity space

Policy H10 states that houses will be provided with private outdoor space, which should be functional, and provide suitable areas for sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space, and should “... *not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.*” The supporting text of the policy states that houses should have private amenity space no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling.

The proposed scheme would result in a reduced garden at 5 Stoneham Close and would include a very small rear garden of its own. The quality of the space would also be further detrimentally affected by the location of the electric substation. The proposal would have a small and cramped

garden for both the existing and proposed dwelling, which would have a detrimental effect on the enjoyment of the spaces by existing and future residents. As discussed above, Policy H10 states that all houses are to be provided with 'functional private amenity space'. Whilst some private amenity space has been annotated on the proposed site plan, the space would be limited and not characteristic of those in surrounding plots (which are far more generous in size and more suited to family accommodation). The amenity space would thus be heavily constrained by the parking area as required by application. Consequently, the proposals in any event would not allow for an attractive or enjoyable amenity area, and would not be a similar size to the adjacent residential properties. Similarly, given the distance to neighbouring properties and nature of the proposed 2 bed unit, it is considered that it would result in a significant noise or disturbance to the nearby neighbouring properties due to the close relationship between the rear gardens and boundary fencing and noise disturbance from car parking. The above mentioned policies also relate to the amenity of residents and the enjoyment of their gardens. In addition to the principle objections over the location of the proposal, the amenity of nearby residents, and the enjoyment of their rear gardens would be compromised by locating a new dwelling in close proximity of existing residential gardens. With regard to noise and disturbance, should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, conditions would have been required in respect of protecting neighbours during the construction period.

Space standards Policy H5 sets out a number of standards that new build housing should be built to. This includes that dwellings should meet the National Space Standards for their internal space. The proposal, by virtue of the bedroom sizes would be considered a 2-bed 4-person dwelling. The Design and access statement states *'For a two storey 2no. bedroom dwelling the minimum GIA is 70sqm (3 persons) or 79sqm (4 persons)*. The proposed dwelling would be ~72m².

The Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) states that a new dwelling should have a minimum 2.0m² of built in storage and at least 75% of the GIA must be 2.3m or higher. Areas below 1.5m in height do not count towards GIA in sloping ceilings whilst areas between 0.9m and 1.5m in height count as 50% if used for storage. The first floor rooms are built into the roof. It is not clear from the plans which areas of the first floor will provide an acceptable ceiling height due to the proposed sloping roofline. The proposed plans show a bed on the north facing wall that would fall under the lowest part of the roof.

No confirmation has been provided as to whether the first floor rooms would provide sufficient provision for headroom/headspace of 1.5m in order to meet the required standards for habitable space in order to achieve the stated sqm floor area. This is a failure to demonstrate and casts doubt on the integrity and legitimacy of the architectural response, due to the convoluted design and forms part of a reason for refusal. In light of the above the numerous individual shortfalls identified, when considered cumulatively, result in an overall conclusion that the quality of accommodation for future occupiers would be contrary to Policies CC8, H5, H10 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Sustainability

The new dwelling would be required to meet current building regulations and conditions could be applied to ensure a higher water efficiency standard.

Transport

Policy TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 states that *"Development will only be permitted where:-*

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;*
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;*
- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;*

*iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and
v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided."*

Policy TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 states "*Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.*"

The Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011) categorises the Reading LPA into four zones for accessibility, based on frequency and distance to bus routes, it also designates maximum parking standards for each zone, including minimum cycle storage standards. The site is designated as 'zone 3' which is still within 300m (most direct walking route) of a high frequency bus route which runs along the Meadway. is less accessible than other zones.

The proposal has provided a 2 replacement parking spaces for the lost off street parking to the host dwelling, and 2 parking spaces for the proposal. The layout has sought provision of parking in a different location to the area of the existing access and requires changes to the provision of a dropped kerb.

The parking levels meet the maximum parking standards contained within the Adopted parking standards and design supplementary planning document. Though this level of parking is capable of being provided on site, it would be at odds with the desire within the Reading Transport Plan to support more use of public and active transport modes. Also the proposed parking layouts must not have a knock-on effect on the safety and function of the highway.

The design comments above regarding how the site presents as a result of the parking spaces are considered to detract from the scheme. It is clear that the existing side and rear boundary fencing for the existing dwelling at 5 Stoneham Close have also been moved closer to the pedestrian footpath along Stoneham Close reducing visibility from the former access. There is a failure to demonstrate how the revised access will join up to the pedestrian footpath as the proposed parking spaces for the new dwelling are sited at a lower level than the existing footpath and whether the difference in height has been incorporated into the visibility splays. The width of existing access is also proposed to be reduced to access the electric substation. No evidence has been provided that maintenance vehicles will still be able to service the existing electric substation.

Details of cycle storage have been shown on an area to land in front of the electric substation.

In accordance with policy TR5, any new dwellings with off street parking would be required to provide one EV charging point. Details have not been provided, though this could be secured by condition should approval have been recommended.

The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of Stoneham Close would result in conflicting traffic movements which would have an adverse effect on road safety and the flow of traffic. This would be in conflict with Local Plan Policies TR3 and TR5. Therefore, failure to demonstrate access in accordance with TR3, and TR5 is included as a reason for refusal.

BNG, Trees, Ecology and Landscaping

From 12 February 2024, amendments to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) made it mandatory for all developments in England to provide a biodiversity net gain of 10%. This included, as of 2 May 2024, that this also applied to all 'minor' developments. As such, all development approvals as considered to have a

condition applied that they must provide this.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development. In accordance with Central Government guidance: *“When determining a planning application, biodiversity net gain will often be a material consideration, and local planning authorities will want to consider, where relevant, whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being discharged successfully through the imposition of conditions and agreement of section 106 planning obligations to secure significant onsite biodiversity gains and registered offsite biodiversity gains.”*

The applicant has provided a biodiversity improvement calculation based on the proposed on the plans that include an area of land in front of the electric substation.

BNG, Trees and landscaping Policy EN12 states that development should ‘*Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*

- *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

Policy EN14 states ‘*New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage*’ and that ‘*Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.*’ The RBC ecologist was satisfied with the Biodiversity Net Gain uplift information submitted, subject to a condition in relation to nesting birds, wildlife friendly planting and biodiversity enhancements for the site. There should be no net loss of biodiversity on site, with a resultant net gain for Biodiversity wherever possible. *The comment for the RBC ecologist was made on information as submitted however there are queries relating to land ownership of the area to the front of the substation.*

Additional information is required in relation to the existing trees located along the boundary with 7 Stoneham Close and 81 Cockney Hill. The arboricultural impact assessment has not taken into account trees in the vicinity of the site. Though this may be able to be conditioned should approval be recommended, in this instance, it would form a reason for refusal in not demonstrating that trees in close proximity to the new dwelling can be protected. When the culmination of the over development on site is taken into consideration, with the relationship of the existing surrounding buildings, there is little opportunity for additional landscaping due to the extent of hardstanding surface and remaining areas to be landscaped, contrary to policy H10 and EN12 and EN14.

Affordable Housing

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF states that *“Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required...”*

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that *“Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required³⁰, and expect it to be met on-site unless:*

- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and*
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities”*

As outlined within the material submitted with the Local Plan review for the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and in accordance with Policy H3, Reading has an acute need for affordable housing and has a long established policy securing affordable housing on all sites for new housing. Policy H3 therefore, requires all residential development to make an appropriate contribution towards

affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading. On sites of 1-4 dwellings, that is sought to be a financial contribution equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable elsewhere in the Borough.

The applicant has duly agreed to contribute toward affordable housing in line with policy requirements. Though, no draft agreement, nor valuations for the proposed development have been put forward to support this and determine an appropriate sum. Therefore, a reason for refusal for the failure to contribute toward affordable housing will be included. It will be noted that this could be overcome by the provision of suitable legal agreement in line with s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Other Matters

The proposed development, should it have been approved would have been CIL liable.

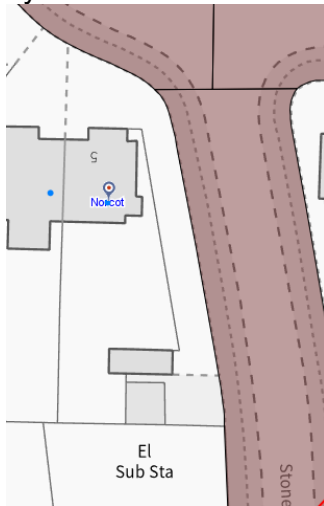
Waste Services

Waste storage is not illustrated in the proposed plans for the existing or new dwelling. A condition for additional bin storage details and the presentation of bins to the highway for collection would be required.

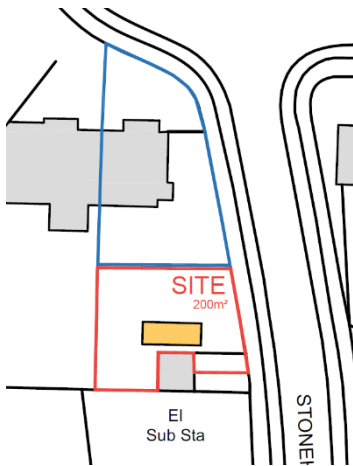
Land Ownership

The land ownership is unclear. It appears that part of the substation land has been included within the site location plan, however a Part A certificate of ownership declaration has been made. The applicant has provided no evidence of prior notification to SSE.

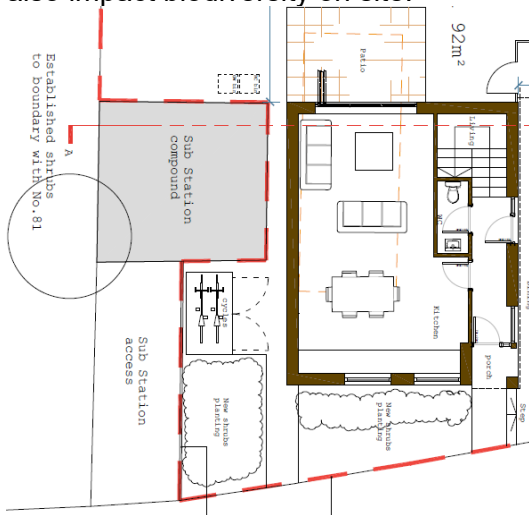
Plan from the Council mapping shows the substation land, this can be compared to the plan provided by SSE as shown above:



Location plan submitted by the applicant



Landscaping and a cycle store are shown to be located within the SSE sub-station land, this would also impact biodiversity on site.



8. CONCLUSION

The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area through the creation of a cramped and inappropriate dwelling. It would cause harm to neighbour's living conditions through the creation of a sense of enclosure and an overbearing presence in close proximity to the boundary. The living conditions of future occupants would be compromised given the poor quality of both internal and external space. The proposal is unacceptable in principle and does not respond positively to local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. In weighing up the planning benefits of the proposal with regard to introduction of one additional unit to the housing stock within the borough, assisting the local plan target against the dis-benefits of the scheme as detailed at length within the above sections it is considered that the identified harm of the introduction of a dwelling in the proposed location on both existing and future residents would significantly outweigh the benefits of the proposal. As such, the application is recommended for refusal.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Refusal

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

1. The proposed development, by reason of its inappropriate siting and its uncharacteristic relationship to surrounding buildings, existing urban grain and spaces around buildings, would appear as a poorly integrated, obtrusive and incongruous feature within its setting. The proposal would fail to respect the size and character of similar spacious corner plots in the vicinity, including garden areas. The proposal would represent an overdevelopment and overly intensive use of the existing plot. It would be uncharacteristic of the surrounding area which is characterised by long spacious gardens, open corner plots, detached houses and semidetached pairs, and would fail to preserve or enhance the local character. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policies H2, H11, H10 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 135 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 (as amended February 2025).
2. The proposed development, due to its layout within the plot, contrived design, convoluted to fit into a constrained plot and in close proximity to neighbouring gardens and boundary fencing results in an unneighbourly and overbearing impact on the garden amenity of 5, 7 Stoneham Close and 81 Cockney Hill. The design would result in a poor outlook onto boundary fencing, the creation of an unacceptable sense of enclosure and an overbearing presence on the boundary, with consequent harm to outlook and amenity of occupants at 5 Stoneham Close and the new dwelling. Furthermore the plans do not illustrate that sufficient headroom can be achieved on the first floor of the property. The appearance of the new dwelling would fail to respond positively to the character and appearance of the area. There are inconsistencies in the layout and positioning of fenestration on the plans and elevations. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policies CC7, CC8 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and Paragraphs 124, 135 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 (as amended February 2025).
3. The proposal would result in an overdevelopment of the site and the reduction in private amenity garden space for the existing dwelling at 5 Stoneham Close and inadequate space for the proposed dwelling. This would result in an unacceptable loss of private residential garden and would fail to provide adequate, cramped and overlooked private amenity space relative to the size of both dwellings. The proposed development therefore fails to provide sufficient private outdoor space will be provided for both the existing and new dwelling. The development Date: 16 January 2026 SDV Acting Assistant Director, Planning, Transport & Public Protection is therefore contrary to Policies CC8, H10, H11 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted November 2019 and Paragraphs 135 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024(as amended February 2025).
4. The proposal has failed to demonstrate that adjacent trees would be protected as trees within the vicinity have not been included in the tree survey, with inconsistent information provided. Furthermore, the limited space around the house would not allow the opportunity for meaningful landscaping and the subdivided plot would have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of the gardens. For the above reasons, the application has failed to demonstrate that it would not be harmful to existing trees and biodiversity or that it would be possible to provide a suitable level of landscaping to successfully mitigate the impact of the development and provide wildlife-friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements, to the detriment of the suburban amenity of the area; contrary to Policies CC7, H10, H11, EN12 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 135, 136, 187 and 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 (as amended February 2025).
5. The proposal fails to demonstrate that it would provide safe and appropriate parking and access arrangements for both the proposed houses and the existing property and following prior demolition does not provide replacement garage for 5 Stoneham Close to avoid manoeuvres at the corner of the top of the hill at Stoneham Close. This development would adversely affect road safety and the free

flow of traffic on the surrounding highways. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) and paragraphs 108 and 135 of the NPPF 2024 (as amended February 2025).

6. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of affordable housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021 and Paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 (as amended February 2025).

INFORMATIVES

1. In reaching its decision, the Local Planning Authority received and assessed the following information submitted:

1082 - SLP 02-01. Location Plan
1082 - PR BP 02-10-C Block plan
1082 - PR 03-10-C Proposed plan
1082 - PR ele 1 05-10 B Front and Rear Elevations
1082 - PR ele 2 05-11 B. Section AA

CA-1082-DAS02. Design and Access Statement
TN01 Technical Note – Transport implications CS - coread - 2025-11-11. Motion
BPC 21495 Arboricultural report - 5a Stoneham Close Reading, Bucks Plant Care Ltd Arboricultural Consultancy Service
5 Stoneham form_1_cil
As received 21 November 2025

Email with affordable housing statement 04/12/2025 09:15 to state that contribution will be equivalent to a 10% on-site provision, or alternatively a 5% commuted sum and that the applicant would enter into a S106 legal agreement if heads of terms can be agreed at the appropriate stage.
As received 4 December 2025

V.02 8132 5 Stoneham Close BNG 25.11.25 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Pro Vision
V.05 8132 5 Stoneham Close PEA 25.11.25 Ecological Impact Assessment, November 2025, Pro vision
The_Statutory_Metric - 5 Stoneham Close 05.11.25
As received 9 December 2025

2. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to see if relevant concerns could be resolved to allow permission to be granted. Date: 16 January 2026 SDV Acting Assistant Director, Planning, Transport & Public Protection However, that has not been possible within the prescribed target or agreed extended timescale and therefore the decision to refuse planning permission has been taken.

3. The applicant is advised that the fifth reason for refusal in relation to the affordable housing contribution could be overcome with a suitable s106 agreement or unilateral undertaking.

4. The applicant is advised that the refused scheme, had it been able to be approved, would have been a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable development. For more information go to:
http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2791/Community-Infrastructure-Levy-Advice-toApplicants/pdf/CIL_Advice_to_Applicants.pdf

5. This application was not submitted following preapplication advice for the proposed scheme, following feedback from previous submissions, which can assist in minimising the need for the Local Planning Authority to refuse planning applications. Preapplication advice using the Council's preapplication advice service is strongly recommended before submitting any further planning application(s).
6. Land ownership and rights of access to land on which the electric substation is sited should be established as this appears to fall within the red line boundary. A certificate of declaration A has been provided for development proposed as part of the existing planning application. Landscaping and cycle storage is shown on the proposed plans in front of the substation.
7. The applicant has not provided a street scene with sectional levels for the site, and an assumption following the site visit on the approximate height of the proposal was taken. As above this is questioned and datum heights should have been indicated on a plan to demonstrate actual building heights of the proposal relative to other properties.